



we  
are  
the  
crisis

# A REPORT ON THE

the building, negotiating an informal agreement with the police and administrators, plastering the walls with slogans, turning classrooms into organizing spaces, study spaces, sleeping spaces, distributing food and literature in the lobby, and holding meetings, dance parties and movie-screenings in the lecture hall. This attempt to put the building under student-led control turned out to be too much for the administration, and early in the morning of Dec. 11, the last day of the occupation, 66 people were arrested without warning as they slept. That same evening, in response, a group marched on the Chancellor's house carrying torches, destroying planters, windows, and lamps. What was originally conceived as a largely non-confrontational action quickly became highly confrontational. *There is nothing new without a negation of the old.* By the same measure, even if the people occupying Wheeler on Nov. 20th had little time to reinvent their relations, inasmuch as they spent most of their time fighting the cops for control of the doors, what emerged was a structure of solidarity, of spontaneous, self-organized resistance that obliterated any distinction between those inside and those outside, and that passed, by way of political determination, through the police lines meant to enforce this barrier. *There is no negation of the old which does not provoke the emergence of something new.*

Project Disagree; Academy of Refusal; Research & Destroy; Anti-Capital Projects: the rhetoric of negation conforms to the topology of the blockade, the barricade. We Want Everything; Like Lost Children: and this negation opens onto a space of uncertain drift—a *dérive*—whereby a desire for totality gives way onto the navigation of the not-all. We are the Crisis. This is the only sense in which one might affirm a “movement.”

*Nous Sommes le Pouvoir*, the slogan of May '68, foregrounds the capacity of the “we,” the positive power of solidarity. *We Are The Crisis* would seem to cede some of this power, indexing the being of the we to catastrophe, and thereby to a degree of powerlessness: to conditions that are out of control, precisely beyond the measure our capacities. We Are The Crisis inscribes the “we” as both symptom and prescription, without attempting to evade their entanglement. And this entanglement—our condition—poses a *problem* for power per se. *Nous Sommes le Pouvoir* speaks from and for collective capacities; We Are the Crisis writes the collective that resists, that experiments, into the crisis of capital: into objective conditions. But if we recall that, etymologically, “crisis” means *discrimination, decision*, then the slogan is stripped of any teleological determination of the “we” as simply an “expression” of the economy.” *To decide upon* the we, upon the collective, as both symptom and prescription, within and against the objective conditions of capital: this is the vector of decision along which the current occupation movement attempts to push those objective conditions toward a breaking point.

us to an insurrectionary future. Beyond such a conflagration, there is really no escaping one's reinscription within a series of reforms and demands, regardless of the stance one takes. Only by passing into a moment of open insurrection can demands be truly and finally escaped.

The prospective dimension of the earlier positions is confirmed by the fact that both the Nov. 20th Berkeley occupation and the Santa Cruz Kerr Hall occupation, the successor occupations, did have a list of demands – demands which had a certain tactical logic in developing solidarity, and expanding the action, but that also suffered from the problems of scale, coherence and “achievability” that plague the demand as form. Nonetheless, what happened in both those instances was a massive radicalization of the student body, a massive escalation, one that was hardly at all countered by its superscription inside this or that call for reform. At Kerr Hall, the fact that the occupiers asked the administration for this or that concession was superseded, in material practice, by the fact that they had, for the moment, displaced their partners in negotiation: while they negotiated, they were at the same time in the Chancellor's office, eating his food, and watching videos on his television. They did in fact *get what they could take*, and when the moment came, they didn't hesitate to convert the sacrosanct property—the copy machines and refrigerators—into barricades.

## VI. We are the Crisis

Some writers have concluded that the sweep of the fall's events presents a dialectic between the “adventurist” action of small groups, and the back-footed, reactive discourse of those who want to build a “mass democratic” movement, the final synthesis of which can be found in the “mass actions” undertaken by hundreds in November. This seems false to us since, in retrospect, the smaller actions resolve into the many facets and eruptions of a singular “mass movement” dispersed in time and place. The smaller actions were what it took to build up to something larger. Again: it is not a question of choosing between these two sides, nor of synthesizing them, but rather of displacing the priority of this opposition. The real dialectic is between negation and experimentation: acts of resistance and refusal which also enable an exploration of new social relations, new uses of space and time.

These two poles can't be separated out, since the one passes into the other with surprising swiftness. Without confrontation, experimentation risks collapsing back into the existing social relations that form their backdrop – they risk becoming mere lifestyle or culture, recuperated as one more aestheticized museum exhibit of liberal tolerance toward student radicals. But to the extent that any experiment really attempts to take control of space and time and social relations, it will necessarily entail an antagonistic relation to power. This was evident when, during the week before exams reserved for studying (Dec. 7-11), Berkeley students marched back into Wheeler and held an open, unlocked occupation of the unused parts of

# CALIFORNIA CCCUPATION MOVEMENT

## I. Like A Winter With A Thousand Decembers

In Greece, they throw molotovs in the street. For every reason under the sun: in defense of their friends, to burn down the state, for old time's sake, for the hell of it, to mark the death of a kid the cops killed for no reason. *For no reason.* They light Christmas trees on fire. *December is the new May.* They smash windows, they turn up paving stones, they fight the cops because their future went missing, along with the economy, a few years ago. They occupy buildings to find one another, to be together in the same place, to have a base from which to carry out raids, to drink and fuck, to talk philosophy. The cops smash into packs of their friends on motorbikes. They hold down the heads of their friends on the pavement and kick them in the face.

In Ssangyong, one thousand laid-off workers occupy an auto factory. They line up in formation with metal pipes, white helmets, red bandanas. Three thousand riot cops can't get them out of their factory for seventy-seven days. They say they're ready to die if they have to, and in the meantime they live on balls of rice and boiled rain. Besieged by helicopters, toxic tear gas, 50,000 volt guns, they fortify positions on the roof, constructing catapults to fire the bolts with which they used to build cars.

In Santiago, insurrectionary students mark the 40th anniversary of Pinochet's coup by attacking police stations and shutting down the Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano for ten days. *No more deaths will be accepted, all will be avenged.* In France, a couple of "agitators" dump a bucket of shit over the President of Université Rennes 2, as he commemorates the riots of the 2006 anti-CPE struggle with a two-minute public service announcement for corporate education. The video goes up on the web. It drops into slow motion as they flee the mezzanine after the action, not even masked. It's easy, it's light, it's obvious. How else could one respond? What more is there to say? *We know your quality policy.* A cloud of thrown paper breaks like confetti in the space above the crowd below—a celebratory flourish. The video cuts to the outside of a building, scrawled with huge letters: *Vive la Commune.*

In Vienna, in Zagreb, in Freiburg—in hundreds of universities across central and eastern Europe—students gather in the auditoriums of occupied buildings, holding general assemblies, discussing modalities of self-determination. They didn't used to pay fees. Now they do. Before the vacuum of standardization called the Bologna Process, their education wasn't read off a pan-European fast food menu. Now it is. Fuck that, they say. They call themselves *The Academy of Refusal.* They draw lines in the sand. We will stay in these spaces as long as we can, and we will talk amongst ourselves, learn what we can learn from one another, on our own, together. We will take back the time they have stolen from us, that they'll continue to steal, and we'll take it back all at once, here and now. In the time that we have thus spared, one of the things we will do is make videos in which we exhibit our

title. The prospective future of the college graduate is erased by the crisis of the economy, even as any alternative future made possible through insurrection is rendered invisible by capitalist cynicism. The future is doubly absent.

The radical or anti-reformist position within the movement has often insisted upon a refusal of *demands* as the rationale for occupation—upon a refusal to negotiate one's departure from the occupied building on the basis of concessions won. If any winnings are likely to be mooted, in the long-term, by overwhelming economic forces, then occupation is less potent as leverage for negotiation than as a practical attempt to remove oneself, to whatever degree possible, from existing regimes of *relation*: to others and to the use of space. The occupiers, in this sense, refuse to "take what they can get." They would rather "get what they can take." (This is how some fellow travelers in New York, participants in a series of inspiring occupations last year, have put it). An occupation is not a token illegalism to be bargained away in exchange for whatever modest demands the authorities are willing to grant, since this only legitimates the existing authorities in exchange for whatever modest demands those authorities are willing to grant. Demands are always either too small or too large; too "rational" or too incoherent. Occupations themselves, however, occur as material interventions into the space and time of capitalism. They are attempts to "live communism; spread anarchy," as the *Tiqqun* pamphlet *Call* (an influential text for the occupation movement) puts it. This slogan was written on all of the chalkboards during the Nov. 20th occupation of Wheeler.

The communiqué and some of the other texts associated with the autumn occupations link up with what is often referred to as the "communization current" — a species of ultraleftism and insurrectionary anarchism that refuses all talk of a transition to communism, insisting, instead, upon the immediate formation of "communes," of zones of activity removed from exchange, money, compulsory labor, and the impersonal domination of the commodity form. Communism, in this sense, is neither an endpoint nor a goal but a process. Not a noun but a verb. There is nothing toward which one transitions, only the transition itself, only a long process of metabolizing existing goods and capitals and removing them from the regimes of property and value. Judged in relation to such a project, the occupations of the fall are modest achievements — experiments with a practice that might find a fuller implementation in the future. There is an exemplary character to the actions — they are attempts to generalize a tactic that is also a strategy, a means that is also an end. But can the tactics elaborated within the university escape its confines and become generalized in the kinds of places — apartment buildings, factories — where they would become part of an extensive process of communization? In a sense, the byline of the movement — *occupy everything, demand nothing* — is prospective; it imagines itself as occurring in an insurrectionary moment which has not yet materialized. This is its strength; its ability to make an actual, material intervention in the present that fast-forwards

2008, exacerbated by the securitization of household debt via all kinds of exotic instruments, the situation is little different with students. UC's bondholders bear nearly the same relationship to student borrowing as an investment bank bears to the homeowner underwater on her subprime mortgage. In both cases, the fiction of a "sound investment," of a present sacrifice which will pay off in the future, occludes what is essentially a form of plunder, occludes a present and future immiseration which will, eventually, undermine the foundations of our consumer-driven society.

Given the UC's propensity to favor construction over instruction, or more bluntly, buildings over people, it is hardly surprising that student activists would target those buildings as sites of resistance. The failed Berkeley occupation of the Nov.18 – the first day of the strike – targeted the Capital Projects and Real-Estate services offices, departments responsible for the construction and administration of all campus buildings. The statements which the occupiers released via a blog entitled *Anti-Capital Projects* clarify the terms of the struggle, suggesting that what is broadly at stake are two different visions of the use of space, and by extension, two different regimes of property. Or rather, property and its negation.

These texts fall in line with the broadly anarchist or anti-state communist perspective of the earlier occupations, in which the horizon of occupation, its project so to speak, leads far beyond the university. To the extent that occupation offers, hypothetically, the opportunity to remove a building from the regime of property—in other words, to abolish its status as "capital" and to cancel one's subordination to owners and ownership—it forms a tactic little different than "seizure of the means of production," one with a venerable history and a wide extension beyond the university. In particular, one thinks of workplace occupations and expropriations and housing occupations. With unemployment reaching staggering proportions and with millions of bank-owned and foreclosed homes standing empty, occupation seems like a tactic that is itself a strategy – a form of militancy that is not a means to an end but an end in and of itself.

But any such threat to property relations immediately invites conflict with the police. One also risks conflict with the larger mass of the student-worker movement and activist faculty, who are loath to extend the struggle beyond reform of the university. The radical stream within the student movement, on the other hand, sees the fight for increased access to the university as futile without situating that fight within a much broader critique of political economy. Even if achieved, present reforms of the UC will merely slow its eventual privatization, and the crisis of the university remains connected to a much larger crisis of employment and, in turn, a crisis of capitalism that permits of no viable solution. In other words, the jobs for which the university ostensibly prepares its students no longer exist, even as they are asked to pony up more and more money for a devalued diploma. The pamphlet which has become a key reference for the occupation movement – *Communiqué from an Absent Future* – signals these positions with its

wit, our beauty, our sovereign intelligence and our collective loveliness, and we'll send them to our comrades in California.

In California, the kids write *Occupy Everything* on the walls. *Demand Nothing*, they write. They turn over dumpsters and wedge them into the doorways of buildings with their friends locked inside. Outside, they throw massive Electro Communist dance parties. They crowd by the thousands around occupied buildings, and one of them rests her hand upon the police barriers. A cop tells her to move her hand. She says: "no." He obliterates her finger with a baton. She has reconstructive surgery in the morning and returns to defend the occupation in the afternoon. *We Are the Crisis*, they say. They start blogs called *Anti-Capital Projects*, *We Want Everything*, *Like Lost Children*, the better to distribute their communiqués and insurrectionary pamphlets. Ergo, really living communism must be our goal, they write. *We Have Decided Not to Die*, they whisper. Students in Okinawa send them letters of solidarity signed Project Disagree. Wheeler, Kerr, Mrak, Dutton, Campbell, Kresge, Humanities 2...the names of the buildings they take become codewords. They relay, resonate, communicate. Those who take them gather and consolidate their forces by taking more. They gauge the measure of their common power. They know, immediately, that if they do not throw down, that if they do not scatter their rage throughout the stolid corridors of their universities, that if they do not prove their powers of negation, if they do not affirm their powers of construction, they will have failed their generation, failed the collective, failed history. But why wouldn't they throw down, and scatter, and prove, and negate, and affirm? After all, what the fuck else is there to do?

## II. September, October, November

A particular political sequence is always at once discrete and continuous, at once a singularity and a relay. And the series of militant occupations that would sweep the state in November both emerged from and exploded the limits of a political conjuncture whose parameters were established in September.

On September 24, the first day of the fall quarter at most UC campuses, a faculty-organized walkout over the handling of the budget crisis during the summer erupted into the largest coordinated protest in the history of the University of California. At UC Berkeley, over five thousand people flooded Sproul Plaza. On the same day, two occupation attempts at UC Santa Cruz and UC Berkeley would result in markedly different outcomes. At UCSC, a group of over twenty students successfully locked down and occupied the Graduate Student Commons for a full week, throwing massive Electro Communist dance parties in the open space of [the Quarry Plaza] below the balcony, issuing online communiqués that would circulate internationally, and putting the incipient California "student movement" on the map of radical circles around the world. The slogans on their banners resonated because the collective "we" in whose name they spoke recognized itself therein, saw itself captured, concretized, enacted, redistributed in their terse

formulae, their unabashed desire for totality, their articulation of an urgency at once symptomatic and prescriptive: “We Want Everything”; “*We Are The Crisis*.”

At UC Berkeley, a more ambitious occupation attempt would fail on the same night that UCSC succeeded. Having arrived with equipment to lock down the doors, a group called for the Berkeley General Assembly—a mass gathering of some 300 people on the evening after the walkout—to occupy Wheeler Hall. Despite drawing wide spontaneous support from the assembly when they read the occupation statement from Santa Cruz, any effort to bring their proposed action to a vote was interminably stalled, and a subsequent decision to force the issue by locking down the majority of doors in the building resulted in a tense and protracted conflict between those who viewed the occupation attempt as a “vanguardist” affront to procedural consensus and those who viewed it as an effort to seize an important opportunity for collective direct action. The standoff continued until police walked into the building and cut through the locks some ninety minutes later.

The split within the Wheeler auditorium that night, and the split within the broader UC movement as to how the occupation at Santa Cruz was regarded, would largely shape both the discourse and the practical possibilities of the mobilization over the next month and a half. While a second, brief occupation at UCSC on October 15 would establish the tactic as a constant threat on UC campuses, partisans of slow and steady movement building decried such actions as irresponsible adventurism. This was an antagonism that would persist throughout the fall—a familiar split between “Trotskyist” and “ultra-leftist” orientations within the movement, the former holding fast to the supposedly democratic framework of General Assemblies while the second insisted that actions themselves were the means through which the movement was both organized and pushed forward.

While a massive organizing conference on October 24 would call for a statewide “Day of Action” on March 4, a small group of UC Berkeley grad students—not content to wait until the spring semester to act—launched a website and signature page calling for an indefinite student, staff, faculty strike beginning on Nov. 18, when the UC Regents would meet in UCLA to vote on a proposed 32% student fee increase. It’s notable that although this call for mass action was most actively pushed forward by many of the same people who had attempted the occupation of Wheeler on Sept. 24, it was also supported by representatives of the same groups that had most vocally opposed it. But even if the antagonisms within the movement that had emerged through October and early November would not be entirely displaced by the events that unfolded during the week of the strike, at least the tedium of ideological playfighting would be.

On Nov. 18 and 19, thousands of protesters from across the state clashed with riot cops outside the Regents meetings at UCLA, chasing the Regents back to their cars as they were escorted from the building. The protests were met with

of the administrative class itself accounts for the same amount of money—this year alone—as the budget shortfall.

Even more resonant, particularly for the occupation movement, has been the role of capital projects in the UC crisis. On August 6, the SF Chronicle reported that despite a supposed fiscal emergency that had forced layoffs, furloughs, and increased class sizes, UC had agreed to lend the state \$200 million, money that would be paid back over three years at 3.2 percent interest and allocated to stalled capital projects. Money for construction projects, it seemed, was readily available where money for the educational mission of the university was not. In mid-October, Bob Meister, a UCSC Professor and President of the Council of UC Faculty Associations, published an exposé making clear the link between proposed fee increases and capital projects: since 2004, all student fees have been pledged by UC as collateral for bonds used to fund construction projects. UC retains an excellent bond rating, superior to the state of California’s, in part because that rating is guaranteed by rising student fees. Thus, reductions to state funding actually *help* the UC to improve its bond rating, because while state “education funds” cannot be used as bond collateral, private student fees can—and cuts to state funding provide a pretext for increased fees. On the list of priorities driving the substitution of private for public funding, “construction,” as Meister put it, “comes ahead of instruction.”

In light of such revelations, to hold that “Sacramento” is the primary source of the UC’s woes amounts to either naiveté or willful obscurantism. Not only are current reductions in state funding a drop in the bucket of UC’s total endowment—and nothing compared to the growing revenue of the university’s profit-generating wings—it is also the case that UC administration has powerful motives to both collaborate with the continuing divestment of state funding and to divert its own resources from spending on instruction. For many, this state of affairs is both obvious and unsurprising, and perhaps no one has articulated its stakes more plainly than Berkeley graduate student Annie McClanahan in an address to the UC Regents prior to their November 19 decision to pass the proposed fee increases. “I’m here today to tell you,” said McClanahan, “that when students and their parents have to borrow at 8 or 10 or 14% interest so that the UC can maintain its credit rating and *its* ability to borrow at a .2% lower rate of interest, we the students are not only collateral, we are collateral damage.”

## V. Communization

The collateralization of student fees thus puts into question the very future of the university and the class-relations it is called upon to maintain. As elsewhere in our post-industrial economy, the massive personal debt required to keep the university and its building projects churning along indicate the unsustainability of current class relations over the long-term. Something has to break. If the weakness of the American economy was, in the years leading up to the financial collapse of

end of the night, after the occupiers had been cited and released, after they had addressed their supporters through a megaphone, after the crowd began to disperse of their own accord. The barriers cordoning off the plaza outside Wheeler were withdrawn and the majority of the police began to file away, until two weak rows remained, guarding the building at the top of the steps, under the lights cast across the neo-classical façade. A languid crowd began to assemble at the bottom of the steps, just standing there, aimlessly, calmly staring across the unimpeded space between them and the cops. A parent walked up with two children, perhaps four and six years old, casually pointing up toward the stationary soldiers of property. Everyone might have whispered the same thing at the same time: look how small they look, how sad and out of place and ridiculous.

The illusory power of the police throughout the day was in fact the power of the contradiction of which their presence was merely an index. It was the power of the people inside, the power of the people outside—the power of people, that is—to suspend the rule of property.

#### IV. Collateral Damage

Property is one of the knots that ties together multiple levels of the UC crisis, and that binds it with the larger crisis of the state and the global economy. Citing a twenty percent cut in state funding for the University, UC President Mark Yudof declared a state of “extreme fiscal emergency” in July 2009—a measure intended to legitimate and expedite a slash-and-burn approach of the administration to dealing with the budget shortfall. It has been the mantra of the UC administration over the past few years that the state is an “unreliable partner,” that the crisis of the California economy coupled with the refusal of the state government to prioritize support for public education necessitates a program of increasingly draconian cuts and austerity measures. And indeed, many within the university have accepted some version of this argument, urging students to direct blame for the crisis toward Sacramento and to acknowledge the economic “realities” of the moment: Proposition 13 has handicapped the capacity of the state to draw revenue from property taxes since 1978, and money for public services has dried up accordingly; the crisis of the university budget is part and parcel of a larger economic crisis affecting every sector in the state and taking its toll across the country. Why should the University of California claim any exceptional status?

It has become increasingly clear that such narratives don’t add up; both their credibility and plausible justifications for their acceptance slip away rapidly as one looks into the structure of the UC budget. A recent report on administrative growth by the UCLA Faculty Association “estimated that UC would have \$800 million more each year if senior management had grown at the same rate as the rest of the university since 1997, instead of four times faster.” In other words, while UCOP continues to point to economic necessities and legislative priorities as the root causes of the crisis, it is a plain fact that the excessive and inexplicable growth

a repressive police response, including taser attacks and eighteen arrests over two days. On the evening of Nov. 18, an occupation attempt at Berkeley would be foiled for the second time, when a team of about forty attempted to lock down the Architects and Engineers building—home of Capital Projects, Real Estate Services, and the Office of Sustainability. Forced to abandon their attempt when administrators locked themselves in their offices, the group nonetheless succeeded in drawing strong support from a crowd that gathered outside the building, and the aftershocks of that spontaneous solidarity would make themselves felt two days later. Later that night at UCLA, a group of forty students occupied Campbell Hall, successfully locking down the doors with impressive barricades and holding the building for over twenty-four hours before abandoning the occupation on the morning of the 20th. On the afternoon of the 19th, UC Santa Cruz students, already holding down Kresge Townhall, escalated their occupation by storming the main administration building. They held Kerr Hall for three days, locking it down after their demands were rejected on the night of the 21st, and vacating the building without charges after it was raided by police the following morning. At UC Davis, about fifty students marched into Mrak Hall on the afternoon of the 19th, their numbers rising to 150 through the afternoon, with dozens of supporters outside the doors. Eight hours and sixty riot cops later, fifty-two arrests ensued when those inside refused police orders to disperse. After spending the night at Yolo County Jail, they drove back to campus and occupied another building the next day, taking Dutton Hall for eight hours with a group of over one hundred, forcing the administration to call in riot police again before walking away.

In a word: between Nov. 18–Nov. 22 a “movement” became an occupation movement. But even in the midst of this explosive sequence, with its clear affirmation of tactical solidarity across campuses, no one could have anticipated the rupture that occurred at Wheeler Hall on November 20th.

#### III. Vortex: Wheeler

At 6:38 am on Friday morning, a post went up on Facebook: “UC Berkeley is Occupied. Wheeler Hall has been taken by students after Thursday’s vote by the UC Regents to increase fees by over 32%. After two days of marches, protests and rallies, students have locked down the doors against campus police while supporters have surrounded the building.”

At 6:38 am, the last item of this report was an effort at self-fulfilling prophecy. In fact, only a few dozen supporters clustered around one side of the huge neo-classical building at the center of the Berkeley campus, watching the windows. But twelve hours later, when police finally broke through the occupiers’ barricades, citing forty people for misdemeanor trespassing and then releasing them without cuffs, they were greeted by a cheering, lamplit crowd of some two thousand people who had packed around police barriers all day.

In between, everything swirled in and around the still edifice of Wheeler. *An occupation is a vortex, not a protest.* Shortly after it had been locked down in the morning, police broke into the basement floor, beating and arresting three students on trumped-up felony charges. Occupiers then retreated to the second floor, barricading hallway doors with chairs, tables, truck tie-downs, U-locks, and ropes, and tirelessly defending the doors against the cops throughout the day. Outside, students pulled fire alarms, cancelling classes and vacating most of the buildings on campus. Support flowed to the occupation, drawn in part by the massive and disproportional police presence that gathered throughout the morning and swelled to hundreds of riot cops by the afternoon. Inside the building, police snarled threats at those on the other side—*get ready for your beat-down*—and pounded against the doors in a frustrated effort to break through the interior blockade. Outside—holding their ground against police attacks as the cops set up metal barriers around the building—thousands of students effectively *laid siege* to the building. Or rather, they laid siege to the besiegers.

5 There were various powers of resistance. Across the pedestrian corridor on the west side of the building, students and workers formed a hard blockade, sometimes a dozen rows deep, preventing any passage throughout much of the afternoon. On the hour, many students attempted to organize rushes against police lines around the perimeter, timed by the tolling of the bell-tower and organized by runners between corners of the building. At around 4:00pm, a column of sixteen riot police lined up at the southeast corner of Wheeler, marching toward the backs of the students and workers amassed at the barriers. A gathering crowd, drawn by cell phone communications and twitter feeds, fanned out to surround the advancing column, blockading a path along the east side of the building and locking arms around the cops until they charged a weak point in the chain, beating one student on the ground with batons and shooting another in the stomach with a rubber bullet. When later in the afternoon it became clear that the police would eventually break down the barricades on the second floor, self-organizing groups took up tactical positions at all possible points of exit—even those reportedly accessible by underground tunnels—blockading the loading bays of an adjacent building with dumpsters and forming a human barricade across the doors of Doe Library to the north of Wheeler.

To turn the campus into a militarized warzone was the choice of the administration and the police; but it was also an implicit taunt, a challenge from which students and workers refused to back down, making it obvious that they would not allow the occupiers to be spirited away to jail in handcuffs without a potentially explosive confrontation. As Berkeley grad student George Ciccarileo-Mahler's particularly canny account of the day put it: "Let this be clear: if the students were arrested and carried out, *there was going to be a fight*. A riot? Perhaps (this much depended on the police). A fight? *Mos def?*"

This commitment of the crowd outside the occupation entailed a slight displacement that was audible in the chants of the crowd: from "Whose University?! Our University!" to "Who owns Wheeler?! We own Wheeler!" "Wheeler" is the proper name of this displacement, because the building that it designates became—in an unexpected instant stretched out through a morning, an afternoon, an evening—the site of a displacement of the opposition between a mass movement and the supposedly vanguardist tactic hitherto perceived as the fetish of a few ultra-left adventurists. A displacement, not a fusion. These poles persisted in pockets among the crowd, but their conflict was simply not what mattered on that day. Whether or not all interested parties might choose to describe the event in these terms, what happened was that a "we" numbering two thousand, surrounding the perimeter of Wheeler Hall, declared collective ownership not just of the "University" (an abstraction), but of a particular building, a concrete instantiation of university property. And when this happened the priority of factionalist politics that had defined the movement for the previous two months was shattered by the immediacy of an objective situation. A movement to "Save Public Education" had become indiscernible, within an unquantifiable *durée*, from a militant desire to communize private property.

Several of the occupiers would later refer to the "medieval" character of the tactical maneuvers that day: having retreated to an inner chamber, after their outer defenses collapsed, they ceded most of the building to the police. But the police were themselves enclosed by the barricades they had established to keep the crowd outside at bay. The space was constituted by a *double barricade*—by the barricades of the occupiers and the barricades of the police. This was the convoluted topology of the occupation: the space inside was opened up by being locked down (a refusal to let anyone in); the space outside was closed off by a state of siege (a refusal to let anyone out). There was an intimacy at a distance between these two spaces—the affective bond of a shared struggle—that communicated itself through the walls and through the windows, that crackled through the air around campus, that carried through a rainstorm in the early afternoon, that enabled the occupation to persist. *That it was possible* to hold the space inside, despite the immediate efforts of the cops to take it back: it was the concrete realization of this power that activated the energy and resistance of the crowd outside. That the material support of the crowd outside was unyielding, that it refused to be pacified or exhausted: it was this collective determination that empowered those inside to hold the doors throughout the afternoon. It became increasingly evident that the police—functioning in this case as the repressive apparatus of the administration—were effectively trapped between two zones over which they had no real control: the area outside their own barricades and the area inside the second floor doors defended by the occupiers.

This essentially powerless position—the reactive and isolated position of the police, and by extension the administration—was never more evident than at the